



JOHNSONIAN NEWS LETTER

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THE BURNEY PAPERS

One generalization about the eighteenth century which can hardly be questioned is that it was a time when great letters were written, and saved. Since large houses had capacious attics and closets, there was ample room to store manuscripts. There was also a feeling of the importance of letters and diaries as social and historical evidence. If one received a letter from Horace Walpole, for example, one did not toss it into the waste basket when its contents were noted. As a result, family collections grew and grew.

Everyone is familiar with the extent of Boswell's fabulous archives; of the ten thousand or so extant letters to and from Mrs. Montagu, "Queen of the Bluestockings," now in the Huntington Library; of the huge mass of Mrs. Thrale-Piozzi's papers in the John Rylands Library in Manchester; and of those of Edmund Burke at Sheffield. Not so well publicized but just as extensive are the family collections of the Burney family. It is safe to predict that in the next few years more exciting discoveries may come from them than from any of the others which have been carefully scanned by scholars. One reason is that only within the last decade has the extent of the surviving Burney material been realized.

Someday the story of the dispersal of the Burney papers during the nineteenth century and the complete narrative of their mid-twentieth century reassembling will be told. And a fascinating tale it will be, even though there are no croquet boxes or cattle barns involved. But there are the usual false accounts of burned manuscripts, tales of bursting trunks hidden under beds, and all the romantic trappings of the detective search. When the time comes that the story may be told Joyce

Hemlow (McGill) is the one who must tell it, for she is the Tinker-Isham-Pottle of the Burney papers. How well your editor remembers one delightful luncheon with her in London, late in 1951, when she poured out news of some of her startling discoveries! It is enough to say that because of her indefatigable efforts thousands upon thousands of unpublished letters and scores of diaries are now for the first time available for study.

Happily the greater part of the Burney papers has come to rest in three major repositories: the Berg Collection in the New York Public Library, under the able supervision of John Gordan (this section was owned by Owen D. Young during the 1930's but was not then open to scholars); the British Museum; and the private collection of Jim Osborn in New Haven. To be sure, there are valuable batches elsewhere — in the John Rylands Library, the Bodleian, the Morgan Library, and other public and private collections. The enormous bulk of all this may easily be gauged by glancing at the check-list in the Appendix to Joyce Hemlow's admirable History of Fanny Burney, just published by the Clarendon Press.

Merely to mention the 8,000 and more unpublished letters, the masses of journal entries, work sheets for novels and plays, documents of all sorts, should be enough to whet your appetite for what is coming. Probably not in our lifetime will all of the heavily censored diary entries and the long screeds of gossip and news be printed, but it is our hope that very soon some beginning may be made in this long exciting process. But, you may ask, how much is really worth publishing? The answer is — a great deal. For example, Dr. Burney, Fanny's father, was one of the most amusing and delightful of correspondents. The only reason that he is never mentioned as a rival of Walpole, Cowper, and the other masters of the art, is that so few of his letters have been available in their original form. It is our firm belief that his correspondence, now largely owned by Jim Osborn, will prove to be one of the most valuable discoveries of our time. And other members of the family — Susan, Charlotte, and Marianne Francis (Charlotte's daughter) — could all write with skill and relish. There is a rich treasure of social comment and wit in the hitherto unknown records of this talented family.

As a foretaste, everyone should consult Joyce Hemlow's fine biography mentioned above. Since we are to review it elsewhere, there is no need here to do more than say that we agree heartily with Bob Halsband's verdict in the New York Times. The book is a triumph of perseverance and art. Only those who have struggled with large masses of intractable manuscript material will appreciate her skill in fashioning a smooth and revealing narrative. And only those who are familiar with the traditional nineteenth-century view of the Burneys will be aware of how much there is that is completely new in her portrait. The book is packed with startling surprises, from the first chapter to the last. For purely personal reasons what pleases us most is the hitherto unknown account of the last meeting of Madame D'Arblay and her old friend Mrs. Piozzi. But there are also amazing revelations about other incidents and other more important people.

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS ITEMS

We are delighted to hear that in the Queen's New Years' honors S.C. Roberts was knighted. Sir Sydney retires as Master of Pembroke College, Cambridge, next July, and moves to a pleasant house near the University Library. Many congratulations!

We are also very happy to pass on the news that Fritz Liebert has been appointed Curator of the Rare Book Room at the Yale Library, succeeding Chauncey Tinker. The Yale University Library Staff News for November carried a short account of Liebert's own Johnsonian collection.

Louis I. Bredvold has now retired at Michigan. Recently he was accorded the highest honor the university could give a faculty member, becoming Henry Russel lecturer.

Halsted Vander Poel's new address is Via Pasquale Stanislao Mancini, 28, Rome, Italy. He expects to be there for several years. Another subscriber, Harry H. Pierson, is going to Bangkok, Thailand for the Asia Foundation. He adds that he will be glad to see any Johnsonians who pass through Bangkok.

Pierson, in a recent letter, describes an interesting volume he found in an Oakland bookstore: an extra-illustrated version

of G.B. Hill's Dr. Johnson: His Friends and Critics, filled with contemporary prints and facsimiles. On the first page is inscribed "Edward Maurice Hill, from his loving father, the author, August 27, 1891."

George Sherburn is spending this semester at the University of Illinois at Urbana.

We sadly pass on word that Homer Woodbridge (Wesleyan), the biographer of Sir William Temple, died in January.

We welcome the appearance of a new periodical which should save all of us much labor — its title, Abstracts of English Studies. The first number is dated January 1958. It will be published monthly, and the subscription price is \$4 a year. All correspondence should be directed to the Editor, 123 W. Hellems, Univ. of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado. Eventually the editors expect to abstract articles from some 300 journals, many from the Continent. Even though an abstract of some ten lines can never take the place of reading the original, it can often tell us whether the topic is really one which is pertinent for our researches. Certainly the project should be vigorously supported.

We hear that plans are going forward for the celebration in 1960 of the tercentenary of the birth of Daniel Defoe. The Stoke Newington Library (London N. 16) is planning a special exhibition. Any other plans?

Recently in the New York Times there appeared an account of the presentation to Cornell University by Eugene M. Kaufmann, Jr. of a supposed portrait of Swift, painted by Sir John Medina about 1700. The identification, however, is very dubious. As Irvin Ehrenpreis points out, the portrait has not been hitherto accepted by Swift experts, the features do not resemble those in the accepted portraits, and the artist, Medina, worked normally in Edinburgh from 1690 to his death, a place Swift never visited. Can any of our readers provide further information about this picture?

We might pass on word that Justus Mayer's play Children of Darkness, based on life in Newgate Prison during the time of

Jonathan Wild, is enjoying an off-Broadway success at the Circle in the Square, New York City.

One of our subscribers, Richard Quaintance, sends on a welcome testimonial as to the usefulness of JNL. As he puts it, "Never underestimate the power of a magazine Johnsonians believe in. A few hours after the latest number arrived I almost collided with Professor Greene of Wesleyan, over in the Yale Periodical Room; it turned out we were both looking up the same article, in the same periodical, which you or your scouts had noted.... From miles apart we reached the article at almost the same moment, our JNLs clutched in our hands."

There will be a survey of recent eighteenth-century scholarship in the new volume Contemporary Literary Scholarship (Appleton-Century-Crofts), edited by Lewis Leary for the National Council of Teachers of English.

The prices now asked by some second-hand bookshops for recent scholarly books continue to amaze us. For example, in a recent catalogue Cross's Life of Fielding is offered at \$75; F.T. Blanchard's Fielding the Novelist at \$45; W. Irwin's The Making of Jonathan Wild at \$30; F. Bissell's Fielding's Theory of the Novel at \$30. What's the reason? Have the publishers been too timid in the past and not printed enough copies? Or have they not kept books long enough in print?

In the new Houghton Mifflin anthology Masters of British Literature there will be sections on Dryden by Don Cameron Allen, Swift, Pope and Johnson by James Sutherland, and Blake by Carlos Baker.

Stuart Tave (Chicago) is completing a book on the concept of humor in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. John C. Weston (Univ. of Va.) is completing an edition of the first five of Burke's historical articles in the Annual Register (1758-62).

When we first heard of a new satire The Sweeniad by Myra Buttle (Sagamore Press) we looked forward to it with keen

anticipation. Was this a sign of the rebirth of satire which many have been predicting? But, frankly, we found it very disappointing. Although there is some amusing parody of T.S. Eliot's poetry, the whole piece lacks point and satiric energy. When the author dislikes Swift as well as Eliot, and seems to attack any pessimistic religious poet, he sets himself off from the main stream of satiric writing of the past.

A PORTRAIT OF POPE

From Bill Wimsatt, one of our most active iconographers, comes a note about a beautiful portrait of Pope, recently acquired by "Lefty" Lewis, and now in his collection in Farmington. This is the so-called Lansdowne portrait painted by J.B. Van Loo in 1742, apparently the last portrait ever painted of Pope. As Wimsatt comments, it is one of the most interesting and biographically significant of all the sixty or more archetypal life portraits of Pope with which he is familiar.

This large (44" by 35½") canvas shows Pope in three-quarter length seated, in wig and brown suit, head resting on his right hand, right elbow on a folio volume of Homer beside an inkwell and sheets of paper, left hand extended over an arm of his chair and holding sheets of a manuscript. The background of the picture includes architectural features, a drapery, and a statue of a Roman figure, perhaps Cicero. A number of other oil paintings and some pastels belong in the same family group. Relations between the members of this family have been long obscured by the fact that the fine mezzotint by Johannes Faber, made shortly after Pope's death in 1744 (from the lettering of which a large part of our information concerning the group derives), was made not from this portrait but from a somewhat less elaborate example which, coming down in the possession of the Earls of Mansfield, was during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries at Kenwood and is now at Scone Palace, Professor E. K. Waterhouse, of the Barber Institute, Birmingham, who examined the Lansdowne portrait carefully in New Haven last winter, and who previously had examined the Mansfield portrait, pronounces them both by Van Loo, though the style is somewhat different from his work in France.

The Lansdowne portrait came down from the eighteenth century in the collection of the Earl of Upper Ossory, by whom it was sold in 1842 to Lord Lansdowne. It remained in the Lansdowne collection until the sale of 1930 at Christie's.

As Wimsatt further comments, 'In wealth of detail and general quality of the painting, this portrait seems clearly superior to all the others in the family of which I have been able to obtain photographs. It has in addition the advantage, from a literary and historical point of view, of being an honest and informative portrait. Pope's physical peculiarities were screened out of most portraits of him, and he was given an heroic appearance. A scrutiny of this one reveals that the artist, while not disagreeably accenting Pope's smallness and deformity, has allowed these features to be sufficiently intimated.'

JOHNSON NOTES

This spring the Cambridge University Press publishes a volume of collected essays by Sir Sydney Roberts. The title of the book is Doctor Johnson and Others, and included are a number of addresses already in print and a few which are not. We know you will find them all delightful. In one chapter Pepys and Boswell are compared. In another Johnson is discussed in four aspects - as a moralist, churchman, biographer, and lastly as to his poetic imagination.

We are very happy to see revived The New Rambler, the journal of the Johnson Society of London. The new editor is the Rev. F.N. Doubleday (Hartland, Moores Rd., Dorking, Surrey). The first number of the new series is dated January 1958, and includes much of interest, including excerpts from some of the papers given at meetings during the year.

Boswell's Tour to the Hebrides is now available in a new text in the Everyman Library, prepared by L.F. Powell. The whole was completely re-set and revised.

In looking forward to 1959, the bicentenary of Rasselas, we are glad to hear that Bob Metzdorf hopes to have ready by that time his bibliography- "The First Century of Rasselas." The second century will have to wait a later gathering.

According to the newspapers, Cheryl Crawford and Joel Schenker, producers, have signed James Lee to write a stage version of his television play "The Life of Johnson," to be brought to Broadway next year with Peter Ustinov in the title role. At least then he will shave off his beard and not have to play in a mask.

Some of the Johnsonian treasures of William S. Akin were recently exhibited at the library of the Union League Club in Chicago. Akin himself has written of a play produced by the Boswell Club, suggested by Johnson's letter to Chesterfield. In it Johnson is brought to trial for disturbing the peace of the realm. The final verdict rendered by the jury of dinner guests and members was nineteen for Johnson and nine against.

Donald J. Greene, now in London, has completed an exhaustive check-list of Johnson's writings, including every scrap which can be authenticated, and those attributed to him. For each separate item all the evidence is here summarized. This manuscript reference work should be invaluable for all involved in the Yale Johnson Edition. The first volume, by the way, should be on your desks before the next JNL. Or so everyone hopes. Anyway, again congratulations to Ned McAdam, Don and Mary Hyde, the editors.

Sarah Gross points out the various Johnsonian references in Richard Aldington's piece "The Gullibility of the British" in the Saturday Review for January 18. Johnson may have been taken in by Lauder, but Psalmanazar had exposed himself long before he knew Johnson.

The following articles should be listed: Nicholas Joost, "Whispers of Fancy; or, the Meaning of Rasselas" in Modern Age for Fall 1957; Arthur M. Eastman, "In Defense of Dr. Johnson" (a rebuttal of Arthur Sherbo) in Shakespeare Quarterly for Autumn 1957; Susie I. Tucker, "Dr. Johnson, Medievalist" in N&Q for January 1958; Gwin J. Kolb, "Dr. Johnson and the Public Ledger: a Small Addition to the Canon" in Studies in Bibliography (Univ. of Va., 1958).

When the Johnson Club met in Gough Square on March 25th there were four American guests — Jim Osborn, Arthur Friedman,

Clarence Tracy and Arthur Sherbo. The principal speaker was Sir Russell Brain; his topic, Dr. Thomas Lawrence. Sir Sydney Roberts and Sir Philip Magnus also spoke briefly.

BOOKS ON SWIFT

We are delighted to see a rush of new books on Swift and reprints of standard works which have been out-of-print. Clarendon has issued a revised second edition of the Guthkelch-Nichol Smith edition of the Tale of a Tub and Battle of the Books, and also of Sir Harold Williams' three-volume edition of the Poems. The Muses Library is bringing out a two-volume edition of Swift's Complete Poems, edited by Joseph Horrell. In the Blackwell prose series the newest volume contains A Proposal for Correcting the English Tongue, Polite Conversation, and other pamphlets. The editors are Herbert Davis and Louis Landa. Blackwell has also reissued the early volumes of its edition, including the Tale, the religious satires, and the Examiner papers. Expected in May is a short book by Irvin Ehrenpreis entitled The Personality of Jonathan Swift: a Study of His Character and Works (Methuen).

SOME NEW BOOKS

Just as we go to press an advance copy arrives of A.D. McKillop's James Thomson: Letters and Documents (Univ. of Kansas Press), scheduled for publication April 30. We have long been looking forward to its appearance, for there has been no convenient collection of his correspondence. Now McKillop has brought together some 74 extant letters written by Thomson, together with a number written to him, and also excerpts from letters of such people as Aaron Hill, Pope, Savage, Lyttelton, Mallet, and others, containing references to him. The texts are scrupulously reproduced, the annotation is full and revealing, and there are excellent reproductions of six different portraits of Thomson. This is obviously an important edition, of which we hope to say more in our next.

We are delighted to hear from Clarendon that a new impression of Ian Jack's Augustan Satire has appeared. We hope it will always be kept in print.

Kenneth Ellis, The Post Office in the 18th Century (O.U.P.) contains much new material, some from hitherto untapped sources, about the inner workings of the post office, and chiefly about the career of Anthony Todd.

The Rhetorical Idiom: Essays in Rhetoric, Oratory, Language and Drama Presented to Herbert A. Wichelns, edited by Donald C. Bryant (Cornell Univ. Press), contains a number of chapters which will be of interest to our readers.

George Pierce Baker's Mermaid edition of the plays of Goldsmith has been re-issued as a paper-back by Hill and Wang in their Dramabook series. We welcome the fact that now The Good Natured Man may be easily purchased by students, as well as She Stoops to Conquer.

From William Gillis (State College, Moorhead, Minn.) comes news that with the deaths of the editors of The Works of Allan Ramsay, John Oliver and Burns Martin, the Scottish Text Society has announced that A.M. Kinghorn and Alexander Law will publish the final two volumes of the edition. Kinghorn, a graduate of the University of Aberdeen, is presently at King's College, Halifax, Nova Scotia. Law, who lives in Edinburgh, is the editor of a volume of Robert Fergusson's poems. The most recent publication of the Scottish Text Society is The Poems of Robert Fergusson, Vol. II, edited by Matthew P. McDiarmid. The eighteenth-century Scottish poet, it will be remembered, wrote some amusing attacks on Johnson.

Chronologically Ben Ross Schneider's Wordsworth's Cambridge Education (Cambridge Univ. Press) belongs in our period and should be mentioned. It is important for anyone interested in university studies in the late 18th century.

An entertaining book which we missed earlier is Willard Connelly's Adventures in Biography (Werner Laurie), which contains accounts of his experiences in gathering material for his various lives, among them those of Steele, Chesterfield, and Beau Nash.

The latest issues of the Augustan Reprint Society are to be enthusiastically welcomed: Fielding's The Voyages of Mr. Job Vinager, for the first time reprinted from The Champion, with an Introduction by S.J. Sackett; and Elkannah Settle's The Notorious Imposter and the anonymous Diego Redivivus (1692) (both having to do with a real criminal named William Morrell), with an Introduction by Spiro Peterson.

There is a chapter on Blake by Northrop Frye in The English Romantic Poets and Essayists: a Review of Research and Criticism (M.L.A.). There are chapters on Pepys, Thomas Fuller, Gray, Beresford and Beatson, in S.C. Roberts, Doctor Johnson and Others mentioned earlier in this number.

Other new books to be listed are William Byrd of Virginia: the London Diary (1717-1721) and Other Writings, edited by Louis B. Wright and Marion Tinling (O.U.P.), which, alas! we haven't yet had a chance to examine thoroughly; Mark Van Doren's Don Quixote's Profession (Columbia Univ. Press), useful for everyone who teaches the English novel; Portrait of a Golden Age: Intimate Papers of the Second Viscount Palmerston, edited by Brian Connell (Houghton Mifflin); R.V. Sampson, Progress in the Age of Reason (Harvard); John Henry Brumfitt, Voltaire, Historian (O.U.P.); Jean J. Seznec, Essais sur Diderot et l'Antiquité (O.U.P.); Maurice Cranston, John Locke (Macmillan); Arthur M. Schlesinger, Prelude to Independence: the Newspaper War on Britain, 1764-1776 (Knopf); Lynn Thorndyke, A History of Magic and Experimental Science, Vols. VII and VIII (The Seventeenth Century) (Columbia Univ. Press); Edward Hughes, North Country Life in the 18th Century.

SOME RECENT ARTICLES

For the Restoration period there are: Morris Freedman, "Dryden's Reported Reaction to Paradise Lost" in N&Q for January; John R. Moore, "Political Allusions in Dryden's Later Plays" in PMLA for March; Jules Brody, "The Date of Boileau's Traité du Sublime" in Romantic Review for December 1957; Cyprian Blagden, "The Distribution of Almanacks in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century" in Studies in Bibliography (1958); and an interesting review by Meyer H. Abrams of Curt Zimansky's edition of Rymer in PQ for February.

For the early eighteenth century – Maynard Mack, "Some Annotations in the Second Earl of Oxford's Copies of Pope's Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot and Sober Advice from Horace" in RES for November 1957; Robert H. Zoellner, "Poetic Cosmology in Pope's An Essay on Man" in College English for January; Bernhard Fabian, "German Echoes of a Famous Popean Line" in N&Q for January; Benjamin Boyce, "An Annotated Volume from Pope's Library" (some important notes in a copy of POAS) in N&Q for February; Paul J. Alpers, "Pope's To Bathurst and the Mandevillian State" in ELH for March; Geoffrey Tillotson, "Pope and the Common Reader" (a section from his new book, which is to appear soon) in Sewanee Review, Winter 1958; John R. Byers, Jr., "Another Source for Gulliver's Travels" in JEGP for January; J. Leeds Barrell, Jr., "Gulliver and the Struldbruggs" in PMLA for March; Phyllis Freeman, "Two Fragments of Walsh Manuscripts" in RES for November; R.P. Bond, "A Letter to Steele on the Spectator" in MLQ for December; A.D. McKillop, "Some Heroic Couplets by James Thomson" in MLN for January; Rae Blanchard, "Richard Steele's Maryland Story," American Quart., March 1958, pp. 78-82.

Concerned with the novel: Arthur Sherbo, "Time and Place in Richardson's Clarissa" in Boston Univ. Studies in English for Autumn 1957; Allan Wendt, "The Moral Allegory of Jonathan Wild," ELH for December; Lewis M. Knapp, "Smollett's Translation of Don Quixote: Data on Its Printing and Its Copyright" in N&Q for December 1957; Ernest N. Dilworth, "Fielding and Coleridge: 'Poetic Faith'" in N&Q for January; Robert Newcomb, "Franklin and Richardson" in JEGP for January; Oscar Mandel, "The Function of the Norm in Don Quixote" in MP for February. Norman Holland's "The Laughter of Laurence Sterne" from Hudson Review has been reprinted as an M.I.T. Publication in the Humanities, No. 27.

THE REST WILL APPEAR IN OUR NEXT ISSUE.